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EDITORIAL OPINIONS OF THE LEADING JOURNALS UPON CURRENT TOPICS—COMPILED EVERY DAY FOR THE EVENING TELEGRAPH.

The Public Debt and the Burdens of Taxation.

From the N. Y. Times. The Republican party has hitherto concerned itself mainly with the political reconstruction of the Southern States, and has given but little attention to other subjects. To this cause very likely the reverse has been sustained in the late elections may be partly due. For, although the question is one of deep interest to the whole country, there are others quite as important, and which come more closely home to the business and bosoms of the great mass of the people.

The taxation of the country is beginning to be a subject of the gravest importance, and of the deepest interest to all classes of the people. It comes home to everybody's hearthstone. It affects more directly and more seriously the daily comfort of every man, woman, and child in the land, than any and all political questions put together. Taxation now falls with heavier weight upon us than upon any other people in the world. Our debt may not be larger, but the rate of interest which it pays is greater, than in England, France, Austria, or any of the nations of Europe which we have hitherto regarded as crushed to the earth by the taxes imposed upon the masses of their people. With a smaller population and less wealth than either of them, we have to sustain burdens and endure taxation quite equal to theirs.

Our people are beginning to feel this burden, and they will feel it more and more every year. During the war and for the first year or two after its close, while business in every department still felt the stimulating effect of it—while commerce, manufactures, and agriculture were alike pushed to their utmost activity to supply the losses and repair the damages of the contest—it was comparatively easy to pay the taxes, no matter how heavy they might fall. But that state of things has passed away. Industry is on the whole very greatly depressed. The demand for labor has not increased. Taxation has raised the price of every article of consumption. Rents, not only in the great cities but everywhere else, are so enormously high that to live in comfort and with a reasonable amount of space is, for men in moderate circumstances and with families, simply impossible.

The reaction, inevitable in all such cases, against the abounding wealth and lavish luxury of a year ago, has set in with great severity, and not one man in ten now makes half the money he did two or three years since. And while a few have been growing rich faster than ever, and the number of those who are very poor has increased in a still greater ratio, the condition of the great body of those in the middle class—neither very rich nor very poor—has been, and still is, growing worse and worse day by day. The great mass of our people not only are poorer, but what is still more important, they feel a great deal poorer this year than they did last. And the burdens of taxation thus grow heavier, and the people bear them less easily and less willingly with every successive year.

It will not do for any party to neglect or tamper with such an interest as this too long. It will force itself upon public attention in spite of parties; and it demands careful and prudent, as well as prompt and effective treatment. The quacks and demagogues of the day, who are naturally the first to seize upon it, need not hope to satisfy the public with their nostrums, or to delude the people into adopting their dishonest and degrading schemes. Neither Butler on the one hand, nor Pendleton on the other, will succeed in winning public favor for their ingenious projects of repudiation. The people do not want to escape the payment of the debt, nor the taxation required to carry it along; they only ask that its payment shall be made as easy as possible, and that the taxation demanded to meet its interest shall be so adjusted as not to crush the industry and exhaust the resources out of which alone it can be raised.

It seems to be assumed by some that the whole of the national debt must be paid by the generation which incurred it, and that we must not only pay the interest now, year by year, as it falls due, but pay also a tenth or a twentieth of the principal, so that the next generation may feel nothing of its burden. Nothing could be more absurd in theory, or more disastrous in practice. Why should the coming generations be wholly relieved from payment of the debt incurred in defense of the integrity of the Union—the existence of the nation? Are they to share none of the advantages it has secured—none of the blessings it has bought? Unless the legitimate results of the war are thrown away by party ambition or political quackery, coming generations will share in these blessings far more richly than we can do. The present generation gave generously of its blood, and took upon itself all the dreadful sufferings to families, neighborhoods, and States, which such a war involves; is it too much to ask that those who are to come after them should not pay at least part of the debts incurred so largely on their behalf? In strict justice, those who fought the war should be released entirely from paying the debt which it cost. Exhausted as the country is by the tremendous struggle, checked and depressed for the moment as are all its industries and sources of wealth, they should have time to recover and regain their strength, before they are called upon to bear this additional and tremendous strain. It is all which the present generation should be required to do, to sustain the Government, and national debt. Nothing more should be exacted, unless it can be done without making the interests on which it falls.

And another necessity quite as imperative upon the party in possession of power, is a more equitable distribution of taxation among the industries that are forced to bear it. The experience of the world, as well as common sense, shows that the number of articles taxed should be as small as possible; and that taxation should affect as lightly as possible the earnings and the living of the great body of the people. Tax laws, moreover, when properly framed, must be fairly enforced, so that no one branch of labor or of profit shall throw its burden upon others. And while we can hardly expect that Congress, at its coming session, will find time or inclination for any very thorough and complete revision of the whole system of taxation, there are one or two things which it must do, or else incur the brand of complicity with the most flagrant wrongs, or of ineptness to deal with a notorious and flagrant evil. The whiskey tax must be collected, and the law must be so amended as to make its collection possible and certain.

The wrong does not lie wholly in the fact that this one class of men escape taxation—but in the further fact that other classes are

saddled with the taxes which they evade. Every dollar of taxation which the whiskey dealer escapes paying, falls upon the men engaged in other branches of industry. The burden of taxation are thus unequally distributed; and men are taxed just in proportion as they are honest, and deal fairly with the Government. And what is true of the whiskey tax is true, perhaps to a less extent, of the tax upon other products and other branches of industry. Those which ought to pay the most really pay the least.

The Republican party will do well to give this subject prompt attention. It has control of Congress and is thus responsible for legislation upon it. It is the subject upon which they will be most vehemently assailed—the one upon which the Democrats are already showering their heaviest and most telling blows. It is a practical subject, and comes home most closely to the interest and feelings of every man who has an opinion to utter or a vote to cast. It cannot be overborne by any clamor against Executive treachery, by demands for impeachment or struggles to establish negro rights. It must not be put aside or overlooked for any or for all of these. While action upon them should be effective and judicious, upon this it must be prompt and prudent. The public burdens must be made as light as possible—not by repudiation nor any other dishonest resort, but by economy in expenditure, a postponement in the payment of the debt, and an equitable distribution of the taxation which the necessities of the country demand.

Cabinet-Making as a Fine Art.

From the N. Y. Tribune. As the result of the late election, it is again announced that the President contemplates an entire change in his Cabinet. So far as the functions of a Cabinet are purely clerical and ministerial, consisting merely in carrying out in detail the will of the Executive, in putting the Czar's ukase into grammatical language, and clothing the despot's passion and anger with the forms of respectability, we do not see that any Cabinet Ministers could serve the President's purposes better than those now in office. It seems a pity to turn out such pliant premiers, not for a failure to serve a President whom they despise and a policy they disapprove, but from a failure to serve it zealously, and to believe in it enthusiastically. Even the worst of religious despots allow their devotees to believe what they choose, provided they profess and do what is required of them. The President should make some allowance for the early education and life-long antecedents and associations of most of the members of his Cabinet.

If an official like Mr. Seward, whose entire previous reputation had been won in the service of freedom, has proved himself willing to endorse a policy which would have restored slavery in fact after it had been abolished in law, a temper so convenient should be held in high regard by a President who needs tools of that stamp, and may some day want more of them than he can find. If men of clear intellectual acumen, who cannot fail to see the folly of a policy, will silently ignore its follies, and speak and vote for it as often as called upon, what interest can the President expect? The President does want men of a different stamp; men who do not see through his craftiness, and are capable of sincerely believing in his blunders. A hypocritical deference to stupidity does not satisfy him; he must have anybody who will change, if any, will be against, that, food, and thorough. The abilities and semi-republicanism of his present Cabinet have sheltered the President from contempt long enough. Unless they stand combined with a firmness that will bravely oppose his errors, their accomplishments become merely the sugar-coating of his fatal and mischievous errors.

Let him surround himself by men of his own grade if he would utterly unmask his own character and purposes. Let no statesman, no patriot, no sober man come into his new Cabinet. Let him eschew the negative qualities, Blair, Reverdy Johnson, Cowan, Lincoln, and the like. These men would say and do no more for Johnson than his present Cabinet. What the President wants to enable him to resist Congress and the laws are practical revolutionists; Cabinet officers who will give opinions in favor of turning out Congress; a War Minister who will locate and order the troops to that end; a Secretary of the Treasury who will use the financial power in his hands to defeat the law-making power; a Secretary of State who will sign any required proclamation. For these purposes he can trust no renegade Republicans or conservative army officers. None but Democrats who had all the animus of the Rebellion, but who did not participate in it, and therefore were not cured by it, are trustworthy. Jeremiah Black, of Pennsylvania, who thought it reason to subsidize the Rebellion, would prove as true as steel to any policy which he might not have the physical courage to take part in a coup d'etat, but he would lack none of the necessary rashness. His lack of physical courage, as also that of other Cabinet officers, might be supplied by ordering several frondeurs to some rendezvous in the vicinity of Washington, on board which the new Cabinet might take refuge and flight to foreign lands, in the event that any revolutionary policy that the President might inaugurate should miss fire. With a ready means of escape at hand, in case the policy of "cleaning out" Congress should fail, it is impossible to forebode what prodigies of valor might not be accomplished.

With Mr. Black as Secretary of State, and an iron-clad on the Potomac to facilitate escape from all consequences of rashness, no man for Secretary of War would be so eligible as Clement L. Vallandigham. His Christian name is happily expressive of the executive clemency. His experience as an officer of the militia of Ohio, and his military observations within the Rebel lines, and at the Clifton House during the war, would be of vast service to our War Department. Nevertheless, the claims of McClellan, R. E. Lee, and P. G. T. Beauregard to this office should receive due consideration. Notwithstanding the average sagacity generally attributed to Presidential dispensations, we are compelled to regard it as a great mistake that two so available Cabinet candidates as Vallandigham and Pendleton should come from the same State. Whether this difficulty is to be got over by dividing the State or the office, or by honoring that State with a double appointment, we are at a loss to advise.

But certainly the Cabinet of Mr. Johnson could no more dispense with Mr. Pendleton than the "establishment" of Mr. Turveydoan could dispense with the "model of gentlemanly deportment." Mr. Pendleton has an economical mode of maintaining the national credit by repealing all the taxes and tariffs now existing, and collecting the whole revenue of the Government from the holders of its bonds, which will simply enable the Government to "live on the interest of what it owes." Such a scheme renders his appointment as Secretary of the Treasury and Financial Premier a foregone conclusion.

The Department of the Interior would be a more difficult post to fill, owing to the great number of candidates whose claims are fully adequate to that position.

There is Mr. Pollard, late of the Confederacy, and author of the "Lost Cause," which Mr. Johnson is seeking still to save. A formidable competitor with him appears in the person of "Brick Pomeroy," distinguished for his prophetic forehadings of the assassination of the recent President, and his chaotic, classic, and humane criticisms of public men and affairs. Mr. Henry Clay Dean, of Iowa, C. Chauncey Burr, of New Jersey, and the Hon. John Morrissey, of New York, have claims, also, which the President will not lightly overlook.

For the Navy Department no appointment would so adequately illustrate the desire of the Executive to let "bygones be bygones" as that of ex-Admiral Raphael Semmes, whose nomination would be greeted with an overwhelming unanimity of congratulation and confidence by the entire Democracy. As Attorney-General, the great reputation and eminent services of Mr. Binckley, a lawyer of more than six weeks' standing, seem to leave no room for doubt. Should it ever become necessary to establish the doctrine that the Constitution vests the pardoning power in Mrs. Cobb, Mr. B. alone would be equal to the task.

The Postmaster-Generalship might be put up at auction, or drawn as the next prize in Mr. Benjamin Wood's next lottery. A Cabinet thus formed would not be compelled to affect adherence to policies in which it did not believe. By the spontaneous affinity which links together kindred minds, these would, of necessity, stand in accord with the President. They could not avoid agreeing with him except where he was accidentally virtuous or inadvertently wise. The meetings of the Cabinet would be as harmonious as the organs of a taproom, and the business of the nation would be despatched with an ease and celerity rivaling those of the youth who meet in the New York Board of Councilmen. By all means let the President have a Cabinet after his own heart.

The People to the Rescue!

From the N. Y. Herald. "So, boys, a final bumper. We'll be all in chorus chant; For next President we nominate Our own Ulysses Grant!"

"And if asked what State he hails from, This our sole reply shall be— From Annapolis, Court House and its famous apple-tree. For 'twas there to our Ulysses That Lee gave up the right, 'Twas there to Grant for President, 'And God deford the right!"

Here we have the true sentiment. Here we have that feeling which is only brought to the surface by the struggles of the country to free itself from political corruption. The people, weary and disgusted with the narrow views which govern Congress and the President, have patiently waited for change until the only hope remaining is a turn to those men who were not swayed by sectional views; men who belong to the United States—not to the North, not to the South, but to the Continent. These are, to-day, the men for the people. These are they who will give us harmony in our national development, which is the one thing now lacking to force us to the very summit which nature has, from our geographical position, destined us to occupy.

Why stand quibbling over a matter already fought out—already decided? Are we to believe that all the reasoning power of the country is centered at Washington? There may have been a day when Congress furnished ideas for the people; but that day is passed, and it must now be understood that the people furnish ideas for Congress. Failing to heed the will of the people, and shape their wishes into laws, Congress must give place to men who can appreciate our republicanism as it exists. Has this been done in the Presidential and Congressional efforts at reconstruction, we should be now be tramping and rolling about in this Black Sea of negroism.

Our rulers, notwithstanding our desires to give them every chance to correct the abuses of a legislation which overrides every sound principle of statesmanship, have evidently determined that the welfare of the country is of little moment in comparison to the one absorbing idea of party power. Under these circumstances it has become a vital necessity to make a change from demagogues to statesmen. North and South are still awaiting the restoration of the Government to a healthy condition. To-day the leaders of parties are the only barrier which stands in the way of true reconstruction. How well this is appreciated by the intelligence of the different States is shown in the late elections of California, Maine, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. Here the great Union element has, for the moment, retired from the lists and holds its power in abeyance, that the radicalism of its leaders may receive rebuke. This pause forebodes evil to the demagogues; for it indicates that they have failed to meet the demands made upon them and must give place to men of heavier calibre. Now the people turn to Grant, Sherman, Thomas, and Sheridan, and force them into the political foreground.

Did the demagogues think that a little circle at Washington were to shape the destinies of a continent? Did they think that with their proconsular system in ten States they were to forge the weapons which were to give fanaticism another lease of power? Their laws indicate that such has been their feeling. By the great Union element, for the moment, a question which essentially belongs to the people. The people said, in 1861, that the relentless and unprincipled slaveholding power should not split the country into fragments. The flag assailed, we sprang by the million to its defense. We fought to preserve nationality, and to complete the victory which we won we destroyed the principle of slavery, which had created revolution. We did not fight, however, for the purpose of picking up a secondary issue and forcing it into notice as the primary one. We did not fight to prove that the negro should govern the South to the exclusion of the white man, or that the white should be debased by the election of the negro to a false step. Next to the safety of the Union, we desired that every man, black or white, should have equal chances to rise in the scale of civilization in proportion to his own intrinsic ability. We had little disposition to retrace our march, and adding ourselves with the concentrated ignorance of three millions of negroes, to reannex, with vitiated blood, reduced intelligence, and less brain power, the toilsome advance of many centuries, in order to reach the point we now occupy. It was not in the Anglo-Saxon blood to do this, and our rulers have foolishly mistaken the political problem in foisting this upon the country as the great issue before which the only one which, carried to success, will be the salvation of the radicals. The question now is, are the people willing to accept this as the future guiding star of the republic? It cannot be; for, accepting it, we prove that we have lost our senses. There are other and greater issues at hand,

but so broad in their general benefits that our demagogues cannot see them. Our finances, our commerce, our agriculture, our railroad enterprises, our frontier unrolling, our Indian troubles, all call to us for a legislation which the President and Congress have proved their total incapacity to provide. There is, then, no other remedy but that which comes from a change of rulers. Let the great Republican element of the country still pause until the radical power, shorn of its force, appreciates the rebuke of a nation which feels its curse. Then, at the coming Presidential contest, the people may step forward, and by the election of Grant or some other statesman restore our national dreams, and give them that practical reality for which we are so earnestly struggling.

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